

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN KEITH BALES**, on March 7, 2003 at 3 P.M., in Room 422 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Keith Bales, Chairman (R)
Sen. Dale Mahlum, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. Ken (Kim) Hansen (D)
Sen. Sam Kitzenberg (R)
Sen. Walter McNutt (R)
Sen. Gerald Pease (D)
Sen. Corey Stapleton (R)
Sen. Mike Taylor (R)
Sen. Joseph (Joe) Tropila (D)
Sen. Linda Nelson (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Jennifer Stephens, Committee Secretary
Doug Sternberg, Legislative Branch

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HJ 17, HB 378, 2/24/2003
Executive Action: HB 325, HB 378

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 325

Motion: SEN. MCNUTT moved that HB 325 BE CONCURRED IN.

Discussion:

SEN. MIKE TAYLOR said he had talked with the sponsor and they both decided not to move on an amendment that would alter the bill.

SEN. DALE MAHLUM said he had just talked to **REP. WITT** and they both agreed that it would be best to make sure that the legislation was passed this session. Adding an amendment might complicate the bill, putting it in jeopardy of not being passed.

Motion/Vote: SEN. BALES moved that HB 325 BE CONCURRED IN.

Motion carried unanimously.

HEARING ON HJ 17

Sponsor: REP. JIM PETERSEN, HD 94, BUFFALO

Proponents: Barbara Broberg, Women Involved in Home Economics, (WIFE)
Steve Pilcher, MT Stock Growers Association
John Semple, MT Cattlewomen's Association
Paul Ringling, MT Cattlemen's Association
Bob Stephens, MT Farm Bureau, MT Grain Growers
John Youngberg, MT Farmers
Ralph Peck, MT Department of Agriculture
Gary Amestoy, Richland Economic Development
John Swanz, President, MT Stockgrowers Association
Bill Garrison, Rancher, Glen

Opponents: None

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. JIM PETERSEN, HD 94, BUFFALO, said the joint resolution emphasizes that before the US embarks on unilateral trade agreements, such as with Australia and other countries, we fully pursue the multilateral trade agreements that are going on currently with the DOHA trade talks. He said the reason why this is important is because 144 countries are at the table at the World Trade Organization's (WTO) trade talks. **REP. PETERSON** thinks our best chance of getting fair trade is through

multilateral agreements. The joint resolution asks the US trade representative to seek additional opportunities for multilateral trade agreements that will expand agricultural export opportunities. Furthermore, if the US chooses to move forward with bilateral trade agreements, certain conditions should be considered, for example: farm programs may not be unilaterally reduced or phased out, that tariffs may not be further reduced unless the other country reduces its tariffs, that market access be reciprocal, and that non-tariff barriers be eliminated. **REP. PETERSON** also said that President Bush has already announced that he is going to move forward with unilateral trade agreements. He ended by saying that the resolution would send the message that Montana wants to pursue multilateral trade agreement to the point where we get fair access to other countries. He also wants US producers to be protected in the process.

Proponents' Testimony:

Barbara Broberg, Women Involved in Home Economics, (WIFE) said she is strongly in support of HJ 17.

Steve Pilcher, MT Stock Growers Association, submitted written testimony, **EXHIBIT(ags48a01)**. He also submitted the written testimony of **John Swanz, President, MT Stockgrowers Association, EXHIBIT(ags48a02)** and **Bill Garrison, Rancher, Glen, EXHIBIT(ags48a03)**.

John Semple, MT Cattlewomen's Association, concurred with previous testimony and urged support.

Paul Ringling, MT Cattlemen's Association, said he is a proponent to the resolution but wanted to offer some amendments. He emphasized that the state needs protection from unfettered trade between ourselves and other countries. He distributed a copy of his proposed amendments to the committee, **EXHIBIT(ags48a04)**.

Bob Stephens, MT Farm Bureau, MT Grain Growers, spoke in favor of the bill. He added that **John Youngberg, MT Farm Bureau**, would also like to be on record as being in favor of HJ 17.

Ralph Peck, MT Department of Agriculture, said he stands in strong support of HJ 17.

Gary Amestoy, Richland Economic Development, said he believes it is important to send the message that our producers should be protected. He said what is good for our agriculture producers is good for the economic community.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

SEN. MIKE TAYLOR asked **REP. PETERSON** if the resolution would put us in a situation where we would have to trade soldiers and weapons for agriculture products. **REP. PETERSON** said he fully understands where **SEN. TAYLOR** is coming from, but it's hard to be a player in the international trade community if you are not at the table. He feels that since the US is one of the greatest countries in the world and holds the safest supply of food, we need to have more access to trade. As far as the risk involved in the trade talks, he acknowledges that there are a lot of forces that may pose problems, such as the many European countries who often do not support US trade. He thinks that in the end, some opposition might help us. He used the example of trade bans on meat in Europe. He also indicated that trade talks with Australia will probably go very slowly.

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Closing by Sponsor:

REP. JIM PETERSEN reviewed the bill and asked that he be allowed to look over any amendments. He closed on HJ 17.

HEARING ON HB 378

Sponsor: **REP. VERONICA SMALL-EASTMAN, HD 6, LODGE GRASS**

Proponents: **Janet Ellis, MT Audubon**
Ralph Peck, Director, MT Department of Agriculture

Opponents: **None**

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. VERONICA SMALL-EASTMAN, HD 6, LODGE GRASS, said HB 378 is a housekeeping bill that would change the definition of a native plant in the MT Department of Agriculture's noxious weed status. The new definition would be changed from "a plant endemic to the state of Montana" to "a plant indigenous to the state of Montana." She said the old definition was a problem because the word "endemic" had two definitions and the way it was meant in the statute was different from the way it is commonly used by biologists. She ended by saying the new definition is more correct and workable.

Proponents' Testimony:

Janet Ellis, MT Audubon, said she had worked with Sen. Grady back in 1991 when the definition of a native plant was put into the noxious weed statute. She later realized that the wording needed to be changed. The reason why the word "endemic" is a problem is because botanists use the definition to mean "restricted to a very specific geographical area". **Ms. Ellis** said that is not what the statute was meant to deal with. She said replacing the word "endemic" to "indigenous" would clarify the bill. She added that HB 378 would not affect revegetation projects. She also said she would be happy to answer any questions.

Ralph Peck, Director, MT Department of Agriculture, said he supports the change that was proposed.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses: None

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. VERONICA SMALL-EASTMAN, HD 6, LODGE GRASS, reviewed the bill and closed.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 378

Motion/Vote: SEN. TROPILA moved that HB 378 BE CONCURRED IN.
Motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 4 P.M.

SEN. KEITH BALES, Chairman

JENNIFER STEPHENS, Secretary

KB/JS

EXHIBIT (ags48aad)